

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, which are responsive to the third, non-final Official Action mailed on February 6, 2004. In the Official Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 18-81. Applicant has amended certain of the independent claims to further define aspects of the invention disclosed in the specification. Upon entry of the present amendments, Claims 18-81 are pending in the present application. The independent claims are Claims 18, 31, 41, 48, 54, 66, 70, 73, 76, and 79.

All of the Examiner's rejections are on obviousness grounds under 35 U.S.C. § 103. The Applicants respectfully offer the following remarks to traverse these pending rejections.

I. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103 Based on the Travel Agent Article and the World Travel Article

A. The Prior Art Fails to Teach Displaying Passenger-Specific Information Without an Interaction Between the Passenger and Computing Device

The Examiner rejected independent Claims 18, 31, 54, 66, and 79 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious in view of the combination of a 1996 article in Travel Agent (the "Travel Agent article") and a 1996 article published in World Airport Week (the "World Airport article"). The Travel Agent article describes a "ticketless" travel system that allows passengers to "access flight status, arrange upgrades, and . . . check personal account mileage" using either an airport kiosk or software operating on a personal computer. In the personal computer environment, the passenger uses a modem to communicate with the carrier's systems. In the kiosk example, the passenger can "process their own boarding pass using [a] credit card or frequent-flyer card." Significantly, in both situations, the passenger interacts with the carrier's computer systems in order to obtain travel information.

The World Airport article discloses a flight information display system ("FIDS"). The FIDS is described as being able to display flight information as well as advertisements. The article refers to "airport concessionaires" and carriers as examples of parties that can display advertising on the FIDS.

Independent Claims 18, 31, 54, 66, and 79, as amended, all refer to systems and methods for providing passengers with individual information in connection with a boarding process.

Specifically, each of these claims recites that passenger-specific information is displayed without an interaction between the passenger and the computer system that displays the boarding information. Neither the Travel Agent article nor the World Airport article describe providing passenger-specific information without an interaction between the passenger and the computing system. The system described in the Travel Agent article requires the passenger to provide information to the carrier's systems, either using a personal computer or a kiosk, in order to receive information about a flight. The Travel Agent systems are not designed for an environment where passengers are preparing to board. Passengers generally do not have time to interact with the carrier's systems, via either a personal computer or a kiosk, when they are preparing to board.

The World Airport article fails to provide the elements missing from the Travel Agent article that would render Claims 18, 31, 54, 66, and 79 obvious. The World Airport article simply describes a FIDS similar to those described in the Background section of the application. In addition to general flight information, the World Airport article also describes displaying advertising information. However, none of the information displayed using the World Airport FIDS is passenger-specific information. For example, Claims 18, 31, 54, 66, and 79 all recite as examples of passenger-specific information, passenger seating information, passenger standby information, and passenger upgrade status. As illustrated in Figures 8, 9, and 10 in the specification, the passenger-specific information is unique as compared to general flight information because it includes identifiers for passengers. In other words, in addition to the general flight or advertising information that may be relevant to all passengers, the methods and systems of Claims 18, 31, 54, 66, and 79 recite providing information that is particular to individual passengers. The passenger-specific information is often more valuable to passengers than general flight information and can allow the passenger to forego having to stand in line to speak with an agent.

B. The Prior Art Fails to Teach Displaying Passenger-Specific Information In Connection With Boarding

The World Airport article and Travel Agent article also fail to teach displaying passenger-specific information in connection with boarding. Independent Claims 18, 31 and 79,

as amended, all recite a system or method for providing passenger-specific information as part of a boarding process.

As described above, the Travel Agent article does not teach systems that are used as part of a boarding process. Instead, the Travel Agent article describes a passenger using a personal computer or kiosk to access the carrier's systems to receive flight information. The functions described in the Travel Agent article are performed before the passenger reaches the gate where a personal computer or kiosk requiring interactions are ill-suited for the time-sensitive boarding process. As the article describes, passengers "process their own boarding pass using [a] credit card or frequent-flyer card [before] head[ing] straight to the gate."

The World Airport article also fails to teach providing passenger-specific information as part of a boarding process. The FIDS described in the World Airport article simply provide general information to passengers. The World Airport FIDS does not answer the many questions passengers have about their own itineraries and travel plans. In contrast, the passenger-specific information recited in each of independent Claims 18, 31, 54, 66, and 79 provide passengers with more valuable information that is used in connection with boarding.

Furthermore, there is no motivation to combine the references in the manner that the Examiner asserts. There is no teaching in either reference to provide a method or system for displaying passenger-specific information in connection with a boarding process. Even if one were to combine the references as the Examiner proposes, it mixes a system for interactively obtaining passenger-specific information with a passive FIDS that displays general flight information. This combination does not produce the invention defined by the claims.

II. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103 Based on the Travel Agent Article and the Ross Publication

A. The Prior Art Fails to Teach Displaying Passenger Seating Information Without an Interaction Between the Passenger and Computing Device

The Examiner rejected independent Claims 41 and 76 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious in view of the combination of the Travel Agent article and a 1995 PCT published patent application entitled "Check-In, Queuing, Visa, Paging and Assessment Systems" and identifying Richard T. Ross as the inventor (the "Ross publication"). The Ross publication describes a "check-in guidance system for guiding passengers who are checking in" at a terminal. See page

2, lines 20-21. An objective of the invention described in the Ross publication is to provide a system that minimizes congestion at check-in queues. The system includes an input kiosk (12) where passengers input their travel information and receive a voucher. See page 19, lines 21-25. An electronic display (20) directs passengers to particular check-in points (2) using the passenger's number printed on the voucher. See page 20, lines 1-20.

As described above, the Travel Agent article discloses a system where the passenger can receive seating information from the carrier. However, in order to receive any information, the passenger must interact with the carrier's systems using a personal computer or a kiosk.

Independent Claims 41 and 76, as amended, recite methods for providing passengers with seating information. Both Claims 41 and 76 require that the seating information is displayed without interaction between the passenger and the computing system that controls the display. Displaying a passenger's seating information without requiring the passenger to interact with the computing system is a significant improvement over the prior art systems. The embodiments recited in Claims 41 and 76 are well-suited for passengers that do not have time to interact with a computing system to obtain their seating information. The systems disclosed in the Travel Agent article and the Ross publication require the passenger to interact with a computing system in order to obtain any information. Furthermore, the display described in the Ross publication only directs a passenger to a particular check-in point and does not provide seating information. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the prior art references fail to teach or suggest displaying passenger seating information without the passenger interacting with the computing device.

B. The Prior Art Fails to Teach Displaying Passenger Seating Information At a Designated Time Prior to Departure

The Travel Agent article and the Ross publication also fail to disclose timing the display of seating information based on the time of the departure. Independent Claims 41 and 76, as amended, both recite displaying the seating information in response to a signal indicating a designated time before the departure. The Ross publication does not teach displaying seating information and the Travel Agent article requires the passenger to interact with the carrier's computer system in order to receive information. Neither prior art reference describes the method of Claims 41 and 76 where a passenger's seating information is displayed at a designated time.

III. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103 Based on the Travel Agent Article and the Examiner's Official Notice

A. The Prior Art Fails to Teach Displaying Passenger-Specific Information Without an Interaction Between the Passenger and Computing Device

The Examiner rejected independent Claims 48, 70, and 73 as obvious in view of the Travel Agent article. As the Examiner states, the Travel Agent article “disclose[s] an interactive [k]iosk in which the passenger can electronically receive flight information.” The Examiner further contends that flight information displays were well known at the time of the invention and that “it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time [of] the invention to include all types of flight information” including standby information.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's assertions. Independent Claims 48, 70, and 73, as amended, all recite displaying passenger-specific information, including standby or upgrade information, without an interaction between the passenger and the computing device. The Travel Agent article and other systems available at the time of the invention that provided passenger-specific information required an interaction between the passenger and the computing device. Furthermore, prior art flight information display systems, such as the one described in the World Airport article, provided only general information directed to a group of passengers. None of the prior art references the Examiner cites describe a non-interactive flight information display system that provided passenger-specific information directed to individuals. For example, the prior art flight information display systems did not provide a particular passenger with the standby or upgrade information related to her reservation. All of the non-interactive systems the Examiner cites only perform the much simpler task of displaying general information directed to a group of passengers.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's Official Notice that it would have been obvious to display all types of information on a FIDS. Conclusions of obviousness based on “subjective belief and unknown authority” “from common knowledge and common sense of the person of ordinary skill in the art without any specific hint or suggestion in a particular reference” are improper. *In re Lee*, 277 F.3d 1338, 1344; 61 U.S.P.Q.2d 1430, 1434 (Fed. Cir. 2002). Applicants respectfully submit that it was not obvious to provide passenger-specific

information without interacting with a computing system because none of the prior art references the Examiner cites describe or suggest a system with similar features.

B. The Prior Art Fails to Teach Displaying Passenger-Specific Standby or Upgrade Information

The Examiner concedes that the Travel Agent article does not disclose displaying standby or upgrade information. Nonetheless, the Examiner concludes that it would have been obvious to display such information on a flight information display system. Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's assertion.

Independent Claims 48, 70, and 73, as amended, all recite that the standby or upgrade information displayed is passenger-specific. In other words, passengers receive standby or upgrade information that is particular to their itinerary. Passenger-specific information can be useful in an airport when a passenger does not have time to speak with an agent or use an interactive kiosk. Applicants respectfully submit that the prior art flight information display systems that displayed general information about standby and upgrades do not render obvious the individualized passenger-specific information recited in amended Claims 48, 70, and 73. The display of passenger-specific standby or upgrade information is a significant improvement and convenience for passengers as compared to the general information that prior art flight information display systems provided.

IV. Dependent Claim Rejections

If an independent claim is allowable, then the claims dependent thereon should also be allowable because they add limitations to the independent claim. *In re Fine*, 5 U.S.P.Q.2d 1596, 1599 (Fed. Cir. 1988). In view of the foregoing remarks with respect to independent Claims 18, 31, 41, 48, 54, 66, 70, 73, 76, and 79, the Applicants respectfully submit that each dependent claim is patentable over the combinations of the cited references. Thus, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of dependent Claims 19-30, 32-40, 42-47, 49-53, 55-65, 67-69, 71-72, 74-75, 77-78, and 80-81.

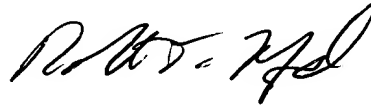
CONCLUSION

The foregoing is submitted as a full and complete response to the Official Action mailed on February 6, 2004. These amendments and remarks are submitted to overcome the rejections of Claims 18-81. The Applicants and the undersigned thank Examiner Oullette for considering

these amendments and remarks. The Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance.

An early notice of allowance is hereby courteously solicited. If any other issues remaining in this application may be resolved by a telephone conference, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at (404) 572-3509.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. T. Neufeld', written in a cursive style.

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